

Practice Readiness Education Program (PREP) Foundation Modules

The first phase of PREP consists of online modules that combine self-directed study and interactive assessments with multimedia learning to provide a foundation in all the CPLED competencies.

- Lawyer Skills – what a lawyer does
- Practice Management – how a lawyer practices
- Professional Ethics and Character – who a lawyer is and how a lawyer behaves

Through these modules you will have an opportunity to develop and assess your skills and build a strong foundation from which to tackle increasing complexity as you progress through the program.

The Effective Lawyer

Reports, studies, and testimonials demonstrate that success as a lawyer depends not only on lawyer skills, but also on personal attributes and skills. The purpose of this module is to provide you with an opportunity to focus on yourself as a person, and provide guidance and tools to support you in meeting the demands of your professional and personal life, as well as to develop and maintain productive and healthy relationships with your colleagues and clients.

Professional Ethics and Character

Professional ethics and character are the foundation to a successful legal practice. Whether you are in private practice, government, or in-house counsel, professional ethics and character are critical to your identity as a lawyer. In this module, you look at ethics and character as competencies and the building blocks to your legal career before focusing on professional ethics and character in three separate settings: professional ethics and character in the office; professional ethics and character in the profession; and, professional ethics and character in the community.

Indigenous Law, Cultures and People

In order to represent and work with Indigenous peoples, it is important for lawyers to understand their worldview, culture and history. Indigenous peoples represent a vast range of cultures and perspectives and this module aims to pique your interest to learn more as you represent an Indigenous client, on Indigenous land claims, or with Indigenous colleagues. Perhaps, even more, it will give you some insight regarding your Indigenous neighbours, family, or fellow citizens, making it easier to work with you on their legal matters.

Oral Communication: Client Relationship Management

Effective oral communication is essential to legal practice. This module will focus on oral communication skills specific to interviewing, negotiating, and engaging in oral advocacy. General communication skills form the backbone for each of these legal competencies. We will first examine the components of effective communication, the need for effective cross-cultural communication, and how to employ those communication skills to successfully manage client relationships.

Oral Communication: Interviewing

Interviewing is an integral part of a lawyer's practice. Whether you are performing an initial client interview, preparing witnesses or experts, or dealing with colleagues, solid interviewing skills, routinely applied and practiced, will bring ease and efficiency to your work. In this module you will learn to use a structured interview approach when interviewing a client, and learn how to put clients at ease throughout the interview, acknowledging their feelings, and conveying a desire to help.

Oral Communication: Negotiating

Concluding an acquisition agreement, trying to settle a personal injury claim, or conferring with a client about pending legal matters – all of these situations require negotiation. Lawyers who cannot effectively negotiate cannot effectively practice law. This module will introduce you to negotiation principles, processes, and preparation guidance in order that you can obtain and deliver the best results for your clients. It is a learned skill which you will continue to develop throughout your professional life.

Oral Communication: Advocacy

Oral advocacy is critical to effective oral communication and central to the skillset you must develop as a lawyer. Whether you are discussing matters within your law firm or law office, negotiating a settlement or resolution with counsel opposite, acting on behalf of a client on an application or motion, or representing a client at the trial or appellate level, strong oral advocacy is essential. In this module, you will learn about the importance of oral communication and advocacy, advocacy in applications and motions, and advocacy at trial.

Legal Research, Fact Gathering and Case Management

Clients do not come to their lawyer with clearly laid out legal issues. They come to their lawyer with a problem or a goal and expect their lawyer to apply knowledge and judgment to help. To do that, lawyers engage in fact gathering, legal research, and case management. These all form part of the process of providing solutions to our clients. In this module you will cover the following topics: fact gathering, legal research, case management and trial preparation in order to effectively solve problems for clients.

Written Communication: Legal Writing

Communication skills are critically important to lawyers in all areas of practice. A poorly written or drafted document is not only a reflection on the competency of the lawyer who created it, but may be the foundation for a potential lawsuit. Litigators, too, are judged by the quality of their writing. In this module you will review the basics of legal writing, and how to write an opinion letter, an advocacy letter, and a retainer agreement.

Written Communication: Legal Drafting

In this module you will be introduced to drafting, which is a specialized form of writing. Lawyers need drafting skills regardless of the area in which they practice law as they create contracts, wills, settlement agreements, orders, affidavits, motions, pleadings, offers, and other documents every day. In this module you will learn how to identify and consider the direct and potential audiences of the communication.

You will learn to adapt communication appropriately in recognition of diverse backgrounds and the needs and sensitivities arising from an individual's circumstances. You will explore the concept of using plain language and a tone consistent with the formality of the context. Finally, you will be taught how to draft accurate and legally enforceable documents, whether contentious or non-contentious.

Practice Management and Trust Accounting

While the practice of law is a profession, and as a lawyer you are held to high standards of responsibility and ethics, it is also a business, which we expect will provide us with a reasonable standard of living. The fact is, only a small percentage of claims against lawyers relate to substantive knowledge. The primary area of claims relates to lack of communication and inadequate investigation, many of which relate to lack of time and matter management. Practice management is a key element to becoming a successful lawyer. Lawyers must attend to the business aspects and rules of their practices from the appropriate management of the day-to-day activities of the practice, to competent financial management, including trust accounting. This module will deal with the breadth of these topics.

Technology Skills and Tools for Lawyers

As the use of technology increases in law practices, it is important for lawyers to have the technical skills to meet the business needs for the current legal market and to be aware of how technology can impact the practice of law. In this module you will learn the importance of developing competence in the basic office technology schools. You will also learn the professional rules that should be considered with the use of technology and how technology can be used to help manage risk within a law firm (e.g., cyber security).

**Canadian Centre for
Professional Legal
Education**

Suite 700, 333 11 Ave SW
Calgary, AB T2R 1L9

403.229.4758
www.cpled.ca